



December 14, 2011

**Dear Union Leaders of the San Diego Unified School District:**

As the new President of the Board of Education I look forward to working closely with you in 2012. This will be the most challenging year since I was elected to the Board of Education. I am honored to follow Richard Barrera whose hard work and dedication have been and will continue to be a great asset to the district.

We will survive this very difficult year by working closely together. We must not let the unreasonable state budget cuts divide us. As a district we have already made many tough choices. Now it is time for the state to make the tough choices about how to protect public education in California. First we eliminated outside contracts and consultants and reduced administrative costs to protect educational programs. That was the easy part. Then we made painful cuts in academic programs, student services, transportation, custodial services and many other programs. We have also increased class size. All of these cuts are going to affect our children's education.

As the Board reviewed all departments and school budgets this year, it became very clear that we are now operating with a skeleton crew and we cannot afford to make any more cuts. The Board has two responsibilities: 1) to protect the quality of education for our students and 2) to produce a balanced budget. Unfortunately, these two responsibilities are now very much at odds.

As a Board we will not endanger the solvency of the district. We will absolutely not give the county or the state any opportunity to overtake the local control of our district. At the same time we will fight together for the minimal funding needed to run our schools.

We must work together to advocate in Sacramento and with the general public about the great value of investing in San Diego schools. The voters will soon get to decide. We have teachers and support staff who have worked to steadily improve student achievement in spite of these hardships. Recent test scores have once again shown that San Diego is a leader among urban districts in California and in the nation.

The Board, administration and employees are all very frustrated by the budget shortfall, but we will come out stronger if we all work together. I have noticed a sincere desire on the part of our unions to cooperate in this crisis. We have a Superintendent whose door has consistently been open to employee groups. We are the San Diego UNIFIED School District. I pledge to do everything possible to work closely with Superintendent Kowba and our unions to save our great San Diego schools. We will find a new path— together. We will not give up until we get there.

Sincerely,

John Lee Evans  
President  
Board of Education